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AUTHOR Ross, Cynthia S.
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ABSTRACT

In 1983, recognizing that child care concerns affect work and academic performance, the president of Oklahoma State University appointed a child care committee to investigate the issue and submit recommendations. Before this effort, the approach to addressing the issue had been disjointed and haphazard. At the end of a year, the following recommendations were made: (1) to expand the Child Care Information Service; (2) to expand the Family Resource Center that provides support services to families; (3) to study the feasibility of expanding the development of laboratory programs so that year-round child care services could be offered; (4) to investigate the possibility of offering a flexible fringe benefit program or salary reduction plan for employees; (5) to encourage sensitive personnel policies; and (6) to investigate the possibility of sponsoring an after-school program for children. However, a mixture of budgetary constraints, possible conflict with academic mission, and lack of enthusiasm at this time led to the defeat of many of the recommendations, although some have been implemented. (HOD)

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"ONE INSTITUTION'S APPROACH TO RESOLVING CHILD CARE NEEDS"

Cynthia S. Ross
Director of Academic Affairs Administration
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078

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INTRODUCTION

"My wife and I both have bicycles equipped with a baby carrier. We meet in the middle of the street to switch our son from one bike to the other -- from one parent to the other. One of us is going to class; the other is returning."

"School begins at 8:30 in the morning and gets out at 3:30 in the afternoon. I work the traditional 8:00-5:00 schedule. As a single parent working as a secretary, my salary does not permit hiring a babysitter for the two hours my daughter is alone. She's only six. I really worry about her walking to and from the bus by herself."

"I can arrange child care while I'm at work -- all three of my kids are in a daycare center. Problems arise when one of them gets sick. Last year they passed the chicken pox around. I missed almost three weeks of work caring for them, and that month's paycheck was not enough to pay the rent."

"I remember finishing up my dissertation . . . running around campus to meet with each of my committee members. I had two kids in tow -- ages two and four. It took twice as long, and by day's end, all of us were frazzled."

"My husband and I are concerned with our son's mental and emotional development in addition to physical care. We worry the most about our baby just lying on his back staring at the ceiling while the babysitter watches television."

"I've changed caregivers three times, and my daughter is just 16 months old. The last babysitter would take the kids out to run errands and leave them in the car while she went into a store. I learned about it when a police officer observed her behavior."

These stories, and many more, were relayed to members of the Oklahoma State University Child Care Committee during their year-long study into the child care needs of the university's faculty, staff, and students. Similar stories can be heard across the country, on any campus or in any business where parents work or study. The problems,

concerns, frustrations are the same for parents regardless of education, race, cultural background, age; but perhaps exacerbated by level of income and marital status.

Research indicates that child care concerns affect work and academic performance. Not as well documented, but of greater concern, are the affects of repeated alterations in child care arrangements and interacting with anxious parents on a child. What is society's, or more specifically the employer's, role in addressing child care? In 1983, the Oklahoma State University President assumed a progressive position by appointing a university-wide child care committee to investigate the issue and submit recommendations.

While parallel child care problems and issues can be found on any campus across the country, a brief description of Oklahoma State University might be helpful in understanding this one institution's approach to resolving child care needs. Oklahoma State University was established in 1890 in the east central Oklahoma city of Stillwater which now has a population of approximately 42,000. It is a rural university by most definitions located within a one hour drive of both Tulsa and Oklahoma City. More than 21,000 students are enrolled on the main campus with an additional 6,500 enrolled through three branch facilities. Over the course of nearly a century this state's land grant institution has grown to include 80 major buildings on more than 500 acres of land offering bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees in a large number of fields, as well as the professional Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree.

Oklahoma State University's position on the issue of child care today is reflective of the past. As such, a brief look at the history of this campus issue is in order. One only has to look back 14 years to find the first efforts directed at child care.

HISTORY

Prior to the work of the University Child Care Committee, the approach to addressing the issue of child care can best be described as disjointed and haphazard, but

the issue was tackled with sincere enthusiasm and commitment on the parts of the individuals involved. What was missing was institutional commitment as demonstrated by key administrative involvement or interest or the use of University resources. But, as with any innovative, progressive concept the early reformers planted the seed, kept it from dying, and those who came later enjoyed the fruits of earlier labors.

Child care emerged as a topic for discussion on OSU's campus in 1972, when a far-sighted assistant dean of student affairs initiated a survey of the married student population to identify and evaluate the principle problems confronting married students. Utilizing questionnaires and random interviews, two common problems surfaced: 1) a lack of sufficient financial resources, and 2) a lack of time to spend together. The survey author reported 49% of this group were parents who faced a third problem -- "that of finding and affording a suitable babysitter."[1] One problem with this survey data was that the "N" was not reported, although the statement was made that the results represented 16% of the total married student housing population.

A second, more extensive student survey was conducted in 1974 by the Student Government Association. This survey data more clearly affirmed the need for quality low-cost child care for children of students. In this study, 275 surveys of 2,725 married students were completed, and 72% of these individuals were interviewed. Of this sample, 61% of student parents were currently using babysitting services, and 73% were using these services more than 21 hours each week. Ninety-two percent of that population felt that a day care center was needed, and 85% indicated that they would use such a service. The Student Government Association recommended a low-cost child care center be established for use by students with children under six years of age. The proposal envisioned a multi-dimensional facility which would provide a continuum of services ranging from full-day programs to "drop-ins."[2] Additionally, the center would be designed to house 35 children with funding proposed from the OSU Foundation (private monies), student association fees, and married student housing funds. The 10% survey

response rate coupled with the rather naive cost projections (approximately $7,000 to establish such a center) did not warm key administrators to the concept.

During this same time period, in late 1973, a university policy statement was adopted related to maternity leave. While quite succinct and conventional in its approach to childbearing leave, the last section of the policy suggested an enlightened approach to parental leave by authorizing the use of up to six months leave without pay for child care to "a man or a woman" employed by the university.[3] As an aside, no "dad" has, as yet, taken advantage of this opportunity with only about a dozen female employees choosing this option since its adoption 13 years ago.

In early November 1976, an OSU women's conference was co-sponsored by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and, at that time, the Dean of Student Affairs. The goal of the conference was to discuss and assess women's programs and services and to establish a series of task forces to address areas of concern. The conference participants agreed that an evaluation of child care needs was required "so that women (and men) students and faculty may have assurance of good child care while they are working or studying."[4]

Such a study was conducted by a young graduate student as a master's thesis under the guidance of the women's conference task force chairperson. While student parents had been the target of the previous two studies, this study was designed to determine the child care needs of all OSU faculty, staff, and students. Each faculty and staff member as well as each married student -- undergraduate and graduate -- for a total of 8,045 people were asked to participate in the survey. The total number of respondents was 1,489 representing an 18% return. The major results of the survey included "an expressed desire for child care facilities on campus;" the identification of currently used caregivers including private babysitters and daycare centers; an indication of high levels of parental satisfaction with the hours daycare is available, the geographic location, and the quality of care; and an expression of a lower level of parental satisfaction regarding the cost of care.[5]

A second, much less comprehensive survey was done three years later in fulfillment of a thesis requirement by another graduate student. Fourteen female faculty members with elementary school age or younger children were interviewed related to their child care arrangements as well as such issues as role sharing, quality time, and overcompensation. Survey participants expressed a desire for university involvement in child care.[6]

In 1981, the newly-formed Staff Advisory Council, following the lead of the women's conference participants, proposed a "babysitting service for employees on campus."[7] Never-say-die, the Council initiated subsequent recommendations related to child care including establishing a policy of personal leave to care for ill relatives including children and initiating a flexible fringe benefit program for university employees which would include child care as one benefit option. No action was taken on these recommendations.

In 1982, the Graduate Student Council joined the other organizations by expressing a concern related to the availability of child care facilities. The non-specific communication received no substantive response.

In ten years, representatives of each of the University's various constituencies -- faculty, staff, and students -- expressed concern related to the issue of child care. Those concerns and recommendations, thus far, had fallen on deaf ears. But in 1982, thanks in part to the preceding efforts, a senior administrator, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research, advanced a three-part, comprehensive child care proposal to the University's Executive Group* which was subsequently approved. Embraced by top management, child care officially became an issue for the University as a whole.

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*The University Executive Group is comprised of the President and five Vice Presidents.

Child Care Information Service

Part I of the proposal called for establishing a computerized information service. The goal of the service was and continues to be to provide child care information, free of charge, to the university's faculty, staff, and students as well as members of the community. The Family Relations and Child Development Department in the College of Home Economics was charged with establishing the service and maintaining its operation. Central administration's support was evident by the funding of the initial computer program and absorbing miscellaneous operating expenses including printing and postage. Publicity of the service was the responsibility of the College of Home Economics and the campus public information specialists.

The Child Care Information Service provides a full range of up-to-date information about infant, toddler, preschool, and after-school care across the community including the respective centers' or caregivers' hours, fees, locations, activities, meals, services, and other miscellaneous information. The information is self-reported by the caregivers/centers, thus the university's role in providing the service is non-evaluative in nature.

Efforts to expand the Child Care Information Service to include a "babysitting file" of OSU students interested in providing occasional care during non-traditional hours as well as a listing of "emergency child care services" for children with temporary illnesses such as measles, mumps, etc. continue. Identifying individuals interested in providing this non-traditional care has been difficult, nonetheless, parental needs for such assistance is a growing occurrence.

The initiation and operation of the Child Care Information Service has been met with unqualified enthusiasm. The contributions to campus and community parents are substantial, and the cost to the university minimal. Once established, the service costs approximately $500 annually to operate with staff support absorbed by existing departmental employees.

Revising Current Leave Policies

Part 2 of the adopted proposal amended the current sick leave policies for university staff members to allow sick leave to be used to care for a dependent residing in the immediate household of the employee. Previous policy dictated that sick leave be authorized only in the event of personal illness or injury of the affected employee. The policy statement further specified that university employees "may not use sick leave for illness in the family, immediate or otherwise. Falsification of this regulation will be grounds for dismissal."[8]

In considering this proposal, the Executive Group modified its wording specifying that such use of personal sick leave for dependent care should not exceed 25% of the individual employee's available yearly sick leave. Adoption of this proposal had immediate positive impact on the university as a whole. It legitimized the current practice of some employees and rewarded those employees who had adhered to previous policy by using annual leave or leave without pay to care for ill children. The policy has had little negative economic impact for the University. No abuse of the new policy has been reported, and a control mechanism exists in that an employee has a definitive amount of sick leave. The adoption of this policy has visibly enhanced esprit de corps among university employees.

Appoint a University-wide Child Care Committee

The third component of the new plan called for the President to appoint a university-wide committee to study the issue of child care within the university and make recommendations. As articulated by the plan, the broad charge of the committee was to study the availability of child care facilities in the Stillwater community vs. the child care needs of the university constituencies -- faculty, staff, and students. The committee had the flexibility to conduct a needs assessment survey if it was deemed

necessary to fulfill the charge. The committee was asked to investigate resources currently available to the University community, and how those resources might be used to address the issue of child care. All alternatives for possible child care services were to be explored during the committee's work including a consortium (employers joining efforts by sharing resources, liabilities, and costs by pooling their populations of parents and children); family day care systems (a network of independent, self-employed family day care operators affiliated with the university/corporation); after-school child care; purchase of slots (employers reserve and pay for places in existing child care programs); alternative work schedules, i.e. flex-time, part-time work, and job sharing; and, work-site child care. Funding to underwrite necessary committee expenses was provided through central administration. Upon completion, the committee was asked to submit its findings and recommendations to the Executive Group.

CHILD CARE COMMITTEE

In February 1983, the newly-appointed seven-member committee with cross-campus representation began work. The charge as articulated by the President was specific: study the availability of child care facilities in the community vs. the child care needs of the university's faculty, staff, and students and submit recommendations. While the committee charge was precise, complete flexibility as well as adequate resources were afforded to address the directive however committee members deemed appropriate.

At the first committee meeting the members agreed to divide into two working subcommittees. The needs assessment subcommittee was charged with the responsibility of developing, implementing, and analyzing a survey which would define the child care needs of OSU's faculty, staff, and students. The second subcommittee was asked to research the child care services and resources currently available in the Stillwater community.

Parent Seminars

As a first step in assessing the child care needs of faculty, staff, and students, the needs assessment subcommittee sponsored four parent seminars. The seminars were open to all faculty, staff, and students and provided an informal atmosphere in which to discuss child care needs. Since cafeteria workers could not attend the noontime meetings, another session was set up at a time convenient for their schedules.

Publicity about these meetings appeared in several different editions of the campus newspaper and employee newsletter. Letters describing the meetings were made available to university faculty, staff, and students through campus administrators and various recognized campus organizations. Faculty and staff participation in the seminars was excellent. Conversely, student attendance was disappointingly low.

The format for the meetings provided opportunity for the participants to share some of their problems and concerns about child care with members of the University Child Care Committee. Questions related to availability, location, costs, quality, etc. were used to facilitate discussion.

The more frequently expressed concerns or comments included:

1. *A majority of parents indicated that they would pay more than currently paying to obtain "quality" child care. However, cost was a concern, particularly for the cafeteria workers.*
2. *Parents defined "quality" child care as including:*
   - *good educational programs as opposed to just custodial care*
   - *trained personnel*
   - *a warm, caring atmosphere*
   - *appropriate teacher/child ratios*
   - *flexible hours*
   - *good food programs*

- *cleanliness/safety of the facili y*
- *low degree of staff turnover*

3. *Some of the problems related to child care most frequently expressed included:*
   - *difficulty in obtaining information about existing child care**
   - *a need for more family day care homes for infants and toddlers*
   - *the need for before- and after-school care*
   - *the need for care for ill children**
   - *the need for care for handicapped children*
4. *Some parents stated that the waiting lists for the nursery school and day care programs affiliated with the Child Development Laboratory of the Family Relations and Child Development Department, were too long thus inhibiting this facility's use as a child care center. Also, the fact that the programs were not provided year-round created child care problems for many participating parents.*

Not surprisingly, the comments and concerns varied considerably between the cafeteria employees and the other University employees, particularly the professional staff and faculty. Contrary to the responses from the latter group, the cafeteria employees/parents indicated other family members as opposed to independent caregivers provided care for their children. This arrangement in part was due to economic necessity, but was also facilitated by the non-traditional work schedule of many of the cafeteria workers. Additionally, the cafeteria employees indicated an inability to increase their child care budgets. The cafeteria workers' definiton of "quality" child care was strikingly simple: quality child care was defined as the child's physical safety. The

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**The plan to implement a Child Care Information Service including a listing for caregivers for ill children had just been approved and was not operational at the time the parent seminars were held.*

conclusion being that until basic needs are met, cognitive, esoteric concerns are not even recognized. The cafeteria workers were unaware of the existence of the on-campus laboratory school operated through the Family Relations and Child Development Department, thus none of their children had participated in the program.

The seminars elucidated the wide diversity of the needs of the campus population to the members of the child care committee. Concomitantly, the seminars provided the needs assessment subcommittee members with an understanding of the thoughts and concerns of many OSU employees and students related to child care, as well as guidance as to key questions to include in the survey instrument to best assess the needs of campus constituencies.

Needs Assessment Survey

The guidance from the parent seminars coupled with committee analysis of other child care needs assessment survey instruments with accompanying research literature provided the backdrop for the development of the OSU needs assessment surveys. The surveys were the heart of the committee's work and provided the foundation for the committee's final recommendations. Due to the unique role of students as parents, it was decided to develop two slightly different questionnaires -- one for faculty and staff, and one for students. The survey differences were not substantive in terms of questions related to child care, but rather focused on personal information about student classification and employment.

The survey instrument consisted of 17 questions (18 questions on the student questionnaire) which can be divided into six categories: 1) personal information, i.e. sex, marital status, job or student classification; 2) current child care, i.e. age of child, current arrangements, cost; 3) affective questions such as level of satisfaction with current care and effect of current child care arrangements on work or academic performance; 4) child care needs; 5) costs vs. needs; and 6) miscellaneous, i.e. does your

child have any condition requiring special programming and comments. (See Appendix A and B for faculty/staff and student questionnaires with responses summarized.)

During the summer months a pilot run was conducted to determine if the questionnaires were easy to understand and complete, as well as whether or not they were capturing the desired information. Randomly selected representatives of the three populations - faculty, staff, and students (both undergraduate and graduate) - participated in the pilot run. After receiving their inputs, the questionnaires were refined slightly prior to final distribution.

The faculty/staff questionnaires were circulated during the month of September, 1983. Advance letters regarding the distribution of the questionnaire were sent to campus administrators and participants in the parent seminars. Additionally, subcommittee members announced the distribution of questionnaires at meetings of various campus organizations including the Women's Council, Faculty Council, and Staff Advisory Council.

A total of 3991 questionnaires were mailed to all on-campus faculty and staff with a return deadline of three weeks. One week following the distribution of questionnaires, a postcard was circulated as a reminder to return the completed questionnaire. The questionnaire was also publicized in the campus newspaper and employee newsletter.

Following the return of the questionnaires, the subcommittee analyzed the responses as follows (see Appendix A for detailed summary):

Analysis of Faculty/Staff Needs Assessment Questionnaires

A. *3991* - *Total number of questionnaires distributed to on-campus faculty, administrative & professional, and classified employees.*

*2477** - *Total number of returned, completed questionnaires.*

62% return

**If both husband and wife were employed by University, they were asked to return only one questionnaire; thus total number of employees' needs reflected by returned questionnaires would be slightly greater.*

Breakdown of Distribution and Return By Employee Classification

	Distributed	Returned	Percentage
Faculty	1229 (31%)	770 (31%)	63%
Classified Staff	2057 (51%)	1023 (41%)	50%
Administrative & Professional Staff	705 (18%)	458 (19%)	65%
Unmarked	- -	224 (9%)	

B. *Conclusions*

1. *The high response rate coupled with the correlating distribution of respondents among the three employee classifications provides a representative sample to accurately evaluate the child care needs of OSU's faculty, administrative & professional, and classified employees.*
2. *While there is a need for child care as indicated by the employees' responses, the need is represented in a minority of the total employees. (Twenty-seven and one-half percent of total population have children under 12 years of age, some of whom do not have child care needs.)*
3. *The majority of the respondents with child care needs indicated that the University could best help meet their needs by providing an on-campus child care center or before and/or after school care, which results in enough children numerically to fill such services. However, the number of employees with these needs is a minority of the total population; therefore, subsequent committee recommendations should not entail substantial University investment.*
4. *The overwhelming majority of the respondents (80%) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their current child care arrangements. In an apparent paradox, when asked to indicate what aspect(s), if any, was inadequate, a number of respondents (143) indicated programs to meet child's developmental and educational needs were inadequate.*

5. *In response to the questions related to the effect current child care arrangements have on the lateness, absenteeism, and productivity, university employees overwhelmingly perceive that current arrangements do not adversely affect their work in any of the three areas.*

In October a total of 2231 questionnaires were distributed to students with a two week return deadline. Again, one week following the distribution of questionnaires, a postcard was distributed as a reminder to return the completed questionnaire. An advertisement announcing the survey was also run in the campus newspaper.

Following the return of the questionnaires, the subcommittee analyzed responses as follows (see Appendix B for detailed summary):

Analysis of Student Needs Assessment Questionnaires

A. *2231 - Total number of questionnaires distributed to students.**

336 - Total number of returned, completed questionnaires.

15% return

Breakdown of Return

Undergraduate	*154*
Graduate	*182*

B. *Conclusions*

1. *While there was no definitive method to identify and contact student parents, the low return rate reflects lack of interest and/or need.*
2. *The majority of students responding did not have children under 12 years of age.*

**There is no definitive way to identify students with children. As such, two comprehensive lists of students were used: (1) a list of returning students (defined as over 25 years of age); and (2) a list of married students. The lists were cross-referenced, with duplicate names being omitted from one of the lists. Then, one-half of these students (randomly selected) were sent questionnaires.*

3. *The overwhelming majority of the respondents with children under 12 (85% of the graduate students; 69% of the undergraduate students) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their current child care arrangements. The majority of respondents who indicated a low satisfaction level expressed concern over their child's physical safety.*

4. *In response to the questions related to the effect current child care arrangements have on lateness, absenteeism, and productivity, students overwhelmingly perceive that current arrangements do not adversely affect their academic performances related to lateness or absenteeism but do perceive that their productivity has decreased slightly.*

5. *The majority* of the respondents (both graduate and undergraduate) with child care needs indicated the University could best help meet their needs by providing alternative work schedules followed by half-day program, before- and/or after-school care, and purchase of slots. However, the total number of students with the needs is not only a minority of the total student population but also a minority of respondents to this survey reinforcing the conclusion reached in Part I that subsequent committee recommendations should not entail substantial university investment.*

6. *Nights and weekends were designated as the times most students need child care. The recently established Child Care Information Service is expanding its program to include a "babysitting" file to provide the names of persons who are available to care for children during these times. Increased publicizing of this program to students may be appropriate.*

**Due to the limited number of returned questionnaires "majority" in response to a specific question may simply mean 11 people.*

Availability of Child Care Services

The task of determining the precise availability of child care services as well as the scope of those services proved more difficult to define definitively than did ascertaining the child care needs. The subcommittee used the following methods to determine the availability of child care services:

A. Committee members contacted all child care centers/givers listed with the OSU Child Care Information Service plus three other unlisted, licensed centers to determine ages of children cared for and availability of care in the various age categories.

B. Committee members randomly contacted persons attending the parent seminars to discuss their experiences and concerns related to obtaining care for their child or children.

C. The committee chairman contacted the Department of Human Services licensing agent for the local county, regarding her opinion/experiences related to child care availability.

Following the analysis of the collected information (See Tables 1 and 2), the subcommittee reached the following conclusions:

While existing child care centers/givers are available for all age children in the community, the areas identified as possible deficiencies are family day care homes providing infant care and after-school care.

Background Supporting Conclusion:

A. *Currently Operating Centers/Givers:*

Vacancies exist for all age groups. Availability is best for toddler and pre-school care. Availability is most lacking for after-school care, followed by kindergarten care, followed by infant care.

B. *Phone calls to parent seminar participants and conversations with the local licensing agent support the need for infant care in a home environment and after school care.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Child Care Committee's intensive investigation and study had spanned a one-year period. It included personal meetings with campus constituencies, a comprehensive needs assessment survey and analysis, and a detailed review of existing child care facilities and caregivers in the community. The following recommendations resulted from this effort:

Recommendation 1: The Child Care Information Service

The first recommendation was addressed toward expanding the Child Care Information Service operated through the Family Relations and Child Development Department which by this time had been operating approximately one year. It was the Committee members' conclusion that the service had not been adequately developed nor operated at maximum efficiency. Thus, the Committee recommended funding for one classified position to operate and expand this service under the guidance of a faculty member. The recommended expansion of the current service should provide additional services to both parents and caregivers. Such services should include expanding the babysitting list and the referral list for emergency care of ill children. Other possible services for parents to consider should include information on the various types of child care and how to evaluate and select from the available services; federal and state tax information regarding child care deductions; and referral to other resources (e.g., programs for handicapped or gifted children). Services to be provided to caregivers should be considered, including the provision of information on licensing and consumer needs. The Committee recommended that the service be properly publicized, especially within key resource

units within the University (e.g., the University Counseling Center, the Office of Coordinator for Returning Students, Off Campus Association, Academic Advisers).

Recommendation 2: The Family Resource Center

Within the past year the College of Home Economics Extension Division had established a "Family Resource Center" designed to provide support services to families. Services currently provided or planned for families include a reading library offering information on such topics as financial planning, childhood illnesses, human nutrition, children's clothes, etc.; a children's clothing exchange; a toy lending library; a car seat loaner program; a singles communication network; and various educational programs. The Committee recommended that the Center expand its educational programming to provide a variety of regularly scheduled seminars to the public utilizing current resources within the college, university, and community. Topics for parents should include, but not be restricted to, various aspects of parenting children of all ages; the location and evaluation of child care services; problems and solutions of the dual career family; and child care tax credit information. Seminars designed for caregivers should include information on all components surrounding licensing and on the provision of quality child care.

The College of Home Economics had submitted a request to occupy a recently vacated mobile unit to house the Family Resource Center which had previously been located in a classroom. The Child Care Committee recommended that this request be approved and that the Child Care Information Service be operated through the Family Resource Center.

Recommendation 3: Child Development Laboratory - Family Relations and Child Development

Responses from participants in the parent seminars, as well as comments on the needs assessment questionnaires, indicated that some users of the Department of Family Relations and Child Development's child development laboratory (all-day programs) have difficulty arranging for child care during the periods when the child

development laboratory is not in session (approximately three months out of the year). There are several alternatives available should the University elect to consider providing child care services to its constituency utilizing this existing facility. One alternative, which has considerable support in the literature, is the modification of existing development laboratory programs, which are established as teacher-training programs, so that they can be used for day care.

Following this model, the Committee recommended that the College of Home Economics study the feasibility of expanding the development laboratory programs such that year-round child care services could be offered. Parental fees should be competitive with other child care fees in the community. Realizing that such an effort would affect the teacher-training philosophy and, concomitantly, the curriculum, faculty and support personnel workload assignments, and the focus of research efforts, the long-range direct and indirect costs of such an effort would necessarily have to be weighed against the benefits accruing to a relatively small number of families using the service.

Recommendation 4: Faculty Council's Recommendation Related to Providing a Flexible Fringe Benefit Program

The Committee recommended the administration accept the previously submitted Faculty Council recommendation to investigate the possibility of offering a flexible fringe benefit program or salary reduction plan for employees. Under such a plan, employees could reduce their taxable income by setting aside some of their salary to create a pool of "flexible credits" which can be used for such items as medical and dental care, child care, life insurance and legal services. Flexible credits used to pay for such items are not taxable.

Recommendation 5: Sensitive Personnel Policies

The Committee recommended the encouragement of sensitive personnel policies where appropriate and advantageous for both the University and individual employee. Such policies include the use of compressed time, flexible work hours, job

sharing, alternative work schedules, part-time employment, and paternity leave. The Committee made the assumption that the current dependent care leave policy has been encompassed within the present paternity leave policy.

The committee members discovered during their research that policies such as the aforementioned are currently available, but few supervisors or employees are aware of them. The Committee recommended that the Office of Personnel Services and the Office of Affirmative Action delineate such policies in relevant publications and other correspondence. Additionally, the Committee recommended that the administration ask the Office of Personnel Services to develop a reward structure to provide incentives for administrators who implement these innovations. It is well documented that organizations which have exercised these options have benefited from greater employee productivity and higher staff morale.

Recommendation 6: Investigate Possibility of An After-School Program

The final committee recommendation related to the possibility of an after-school program. It was recommended that the Division of Leisure Services, in the Health, Physical Education, and Leisure Services Department, which currently sponsors Camp Redlands Adventure Day Camp in the summers for children ages 3-12 years, investigate the possibility of sponsoring an after-school program. Such a program should be primarily self-supporting through parental fees with University involvement only to the same extent as the summer day camp. Ideally, the after-school program could draw on other current University resources such as organized recreation and physical education activities, library "story time," and instruction in subjects including, but not limited to, music, computers, and foreign languages. The committee members assumed should such a program be established that enrollment priority should be given to faculty, staff, and students.

TWO YEARS LATER

In formulating the recommendations, the committee attempted to simply expand existing programs and services thus continuing to fulfill the primary institutional mission as a landgrant university. The recommendations were also designed to assist the university's constituencies in meeting their child care needs. The recommendations were made considering not only the needs of faculty, staff, and students, but also the resources available and the financial environment of the state.

Recommendation 1: The Child Care Information Service

This recommendation was adopted and implemented. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research provided funds for a classified staff member for a period of six months to get the program firmly reestablished. The College of Home Economics was asked to absorb the responsibility at the end of the six months period. The new staff member updated and expanded the child care information and assisted with the development of materials used in publicizing the Child Care Information Service. An information packet was designed to be sent to callers. In addition to a list of area daycare centers/givers appropriate to the age of the child needing care, a "Check List for Child Care" and a "Child Care Center Evaluation Guide" are now enclosed as reference materials for the inquiring parent.

Recommendation 2: The Family Resource Center

This recommendation was adopted and implemented. Educational programs sponsored by the Family Resource Center were initiated in the form of "brown bag" seminars for parents of infants and preschoolers, with topics related to infant nutrition, creative play, parent-child communication, toy selection, and car seat safety. Specific program topics sponsored by the Center include "Blended Families: Helping Children Cope with New Relationships and Remarriage," "Stresses of the Holidays: How to be Good to Yourself," "Safety Tips for Young Children at Home Alone," and "The Art of Listening: Learn New Listening Skills, Identify and

Correct Poor Listening Habits." Weekly sessions with a Birthright-referred young mother on teenage parenting have also been conducted.

The Family Resource Center Coordinator is currently making arrangements to offer educational programs on topics related to systematic training for effective parenting, assertive discipline, step-parenting and blended families, and rule-making for families.

The request for the College of Home Economics to acquire the mobile unit to house the Family Resource Center was approved, and the Center currently operates comfortably from its new location.

Recommendation 3: Child Development Laboratory - Family Relations and Child Development

The President accepted this recommendation and asked the College of Home Economics to study the feasibility of expanding the development laboratory programs so that year-round child care services would be offered. The proposed feasibility study has not been initiated by the College of Home Economics as yet, and it is expected that such a study will not be implemented in the near future due to state reductions in funding for higher education in the state of Oklahoma.

Recommendation 4: Faculty Council's Recommendation Related to Providing a Flexible Fringe Benefit Program

Similar to the disposition of Recommendation 3, the feasibility study of a flexible fringe benefit program for the University has been placed on indefinite hold due to budgetary constraints. The President has adopted both the Faculty Council, Staff Advisory Council, and Child Care Committee's recommendations in this regard, and the study will be implemented as soon as funding becomes available.

Recommendation 5: Sensitive Personnel Policies

No additional university-wide personnel policies have been adopted as a result of this recommendation. However, on an individual basis, where equitable within a work group and not disruptive of department services and operations, an employee's

work week may be altered with approval of the department head. The Office of Personnel Services monitors job-sharing and part-time employment possibilities, working with interested applicants to find partners. Additionally, there has been a renewed emphasis in publicizing available policies.

Recommendation 6: Investigate Possibility of An After-School Program

This recommendation was adopted by the President and forwarded to the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Leisure Services for study. To date, the department has not conducted a comprehensive investigation. Initial review indicated the desired facility for an after-school program is utilized to capacity during the required hours. The facility offers a wide range of activities and programs for the university's students throughout the day and evening hours. Given the facility's primary purpose is academic, and it is funded in large measure by student activity fees, an alteration of its use at this time is not possible.

CONCLUSION

In keeping with the outcome of most child care surveys, be it in business or higher education, the Oklahoma State University faculty, staff, and students declare the three "S's" in child care are their primary concerns: safety, security, and stimulation. Oklahoma State University, in the past four years, has met this issue head on resulting in some successes and some, if not yet failures, perhaps detours.

The Child Care Committee Recommendation 4, investigating the possibility of offering a flexible fringe benefit program, and Recommendation 5, sensitive personnel policies, need renewed emphasis and new life. While Recommendation 3, studying the feasibility of expanding the development laboratory programs into year-round child care services, and Recommendation 6, investigating the possibility of an after-school program, are not buried, they are dying. A mixture of budgetary constraints, possible

conflict with academic mission, and simply a general lack of enthusiasm in the two participating departments, at this time, point to defeat.

The child care successes are genuine and enjoyed by virtually every parent on campus. The availability of personal sick leave to care for an ill child, the Child Care Information Service with its varied services to both parents and caregivers, the Family Resource Center with its expanded educational programs for parents, all signal a progressive sensitivity toward parents as employees and students on the part of OSU's administration. Additionally, the comprehensive study into child care conducted by the committee provided not only a complete picture of this area but will also serve as a benchmark for future efforts.

The financial costs to implement these services and programs were minimal. The benefits in employee and student morale and subsequent productivity have been impressive. It is self-serving for an institution to address the child care needs of its constituencies. But, more important, it demonstrates the humanism of an institution whose primary purpose is the education and development of students into contributing adults. Addressing the issue of child care could not be more in keeping with the fundamental purpose of higher education.

NOTES

1. Kay L. Kielhorn, "Survey of Married Student Needs for Program Development," Oklahoma State University, March 2, 1972, p. 15, cited in Oklahoma State University Student Association, Day Care Center Proposal, Oklahoma State University, 1974, p. 1.

2. Oklahoma State University Student Association, Day Care Center Proposal, 1974, p. 2.

3. Oklahoma State University Policy and Procedures Letter, "Maternity Leave," No. 1-0701, Stillwater, Oklahoma, adopted November 1, 1973, p. 4.

4. Oklahoma State University Women's Conference Proceedings, Stillwater, Oklahoma, November 11, 1976, p. 1.

5. Martha Ann Hedgecock, "Child Care Needs Assessment of Faculty, Staff, Graduate and Undergraduate Married Students at Oklahoma State University," master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1977, pp. 46-47.

6. Claudette Hagle, "Faculty Women With Children at Home," master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1980, p. 63.

7. Staff Advisory Council Minutes, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, December 9, 1981, p. 5.

8. Oklahoma State University Policy and Procedures Letter, "Attendance and Leave for Classified Staff," No. 3-0706, Stillwater, Oklahoma, adopted July 1, 1970, p. 8.

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------, June 20, 1982.

-----, January 11, 1984.

Table I

SUMMARY

CURRENT CHILD CARE CENTERS/GIVERS IN THE COMMUNITY*

Total Centers:	15
Total Homes:	5
Infant Care:	10 Centers/Givers Offer 2 Have Vacancies
Toddler Care:	17 Centers/Givers Offer 9 Have Vacancies
Pre-school Care:	14 Centers/Givers Offer 3 Have Vacancies
Kindergarten Care:	8 Centers/Givers Offer 1 Has Vacancy
After-School Care:	5 Centers/Givers Offer 2 Have Vacancies

* This is not a comprehensive list. These centers/givers were self-identified through either the licensing process or through the Child Care Information Service.

Table 2

CURRENT CHILD CARE CENTERS/GIVERS IN THE COMMUNITY*

CENTER/HOME	TYPE OF CARE OFFERED					VACANCIES	WAITING LIST
	Infant	Toddler	Pre-school (3-5 yrs)	Kindergarten	After-school		
Home		x	x	x	x	2-K	No
Center	x	x	x	x	x	No	2-T/12-P
Center		x	x			4-T/P	No
Center		x	x	x		Yes	Yes
Center		x	x			4-T/P	No
Center		x	x	x		No	12-P
Home	x	x				1-I	No
Center	x	x	x			No	4-P
Center	x	x	x			2-T	No
Home		x	x	x		1-T	No
Center	x	x	x	x	x	Several-all ages	No
Center	x	x	x			Yes	No
Center		x	x	x	x	1-T	Yes
Center			x	x	x	Yes	Yes
Home	x	x				3-I	No
Home	x					No	No
Center	x	x				No	No
Center		x	x			No	No
Center		x	x	x	x	No	No
Center	x	x				2-I	No

NOTE: I - Infant
T - Toddler
P - Pre-school
K - Kindergarten
A - After school

* This is not a comprehensive list. These centers/givers were self-identified through either the licensing process or through the Child Care Information Service.

Summary of Responses in Italics

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Fall 1983

1. Is there a child (or children) under 12 years of age living in your home?

27½% Yes 72% No .5%

If so, how many? (Circle appropriate number) 1 2 3 4 over 4

92% of respondents who say "yes" have 2 children under age 12

2. Classification: Faculty 63%
   Return % Administrative & Professional 65%
   Classified 50%

3. **If there are no children under 12 living in your home AND if you do not anticipate a need for child care within the next two years, please fold questionnaire and place it in campus mail. Thank you.**

If both you and your spouse received this questionnaire, please return only one.

4. Respondent's Sex: Male 12% Female 18% *(70% did not indicate)*
   Marital Status: Married 26% Single 3% *(71% did not indicate)*

5. Child care arrangements while you work:

Following the chart is a list of 11 child care arrangements, each one identified with a number 1 to 11. For each child under age 12 in your home:

(a) identify your current child care arrangements by placing the appropriate number(s) from this list in the table below;
(b) list each child's age and number of hours of child care needed per week;
(c) list what arrangements you prefer.

	Example	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Age of child	4 yrs.	48% ages	1-4 years		
Number of hours of child care per week	30	40-45 hours (42%) 10 hours (10%)			
Primary arrangement now using	4	Spouse	24%); Babysitters	21%); Daycare (5%	
Arrangement preferred (List two priorities)	3 5	1st--Spouse (18%); 2nd--Allday (15%);	Allday Drop-in	(17%) (14%)	

(Use separate page for additional children)

1. Child cared for by your spouse
2. Child cared for by relative or friend
3. Child cared for by babysitter in your home
4. Child cared for by babysitter in babysitter's home/Family Day Care
5. Parent cooperative program
6. Half-day program (nursery school, Head Start, pre-school, play group)
7. All-day child care center
8. After school program
9. Drop-in program on as-needed basis
10. Child cared for by him/herself
11. Other (specify) _____

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6. What do you currently pay for child care per child (choose the one time period you are most familiar with)? (If more than one child, list each one separately.)

Child 1:	$1.51/hour	or	$7.29/day	or	$ 39 /week	or	$ 140/month
Child 2:	$1.46/hour	or	$7.01/day	or	$ 35 /week	or	$ 123/month
Child 3:	$1.27/hour	or	$8.17/day	or	$ 40 /week	or	$ 143/month
Child 4:	$N.R.*/hour	or	$7.00/day	or	$ 52 /week	or	$ N.R/month

7. Are you satisfied with your current child care arrangements? (Circle a number.)

80%

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

dissatisfied satisfied very satisfied

8. If you are dissatisfied with some aspects of your present child care arrangements, which aspects are inadequate?

1. ___ Child's physical safety
2. ___ Competence of caregiver(s)
3. #3 Location
4. #1 Child's developmental and educational needs
5. #2 Cost
6. ___ Health & sanitary conditions
7. ___ Facilities
8. ___ Separation of siblings
9. ___ Hours
10. ___ Nutrition
11. ___ Other (list) _____

9. How important is quality, reliable child care to your continued employment? (Circle a number.)

84%

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

unimportant important essential

10. What effect has your current child care arrangement had on your job performance in the following areas? (Circle a number.) **(Reminder: Your response is anonymous.)**

1. Lateness — 66%

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

decreased no effect increased

2. Absenteeism — 69%

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

decreased no effect increased

3. Productivity — 87%

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

decreased no effect increased

11. How could the University best help you meet your child care needs?

Rank top three by listing most preferred as 1:

1-7%; 2-19%; 3-16% Family day care systems (A network of independent, self-employed family day care operators who would be affiliated with the University)
1-16%; 2-12%; 3-10% Before and/or after school care
1-9%; 2-10%; 3-15% Purchase of slots (University would reserve and/or subsidize the cost of placement in existing child care programs)
1-11%; 2-10%; 3-10% Alternative work schedules (Flextime, part-time work, and/or job sharing)
1-5%; 2-5%; 3-5% Half-day program
1-37%; 2-17%; 3-9% On-campus child care center (all day)
___ Other (specify) _____

*N.R. means no response.

12. Circle the days you would regularly use a child care service for work related purposes.

(Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday) Saturday Sunday

13. Approximately what hours of the day would you need care for your children? (If you check more than one item per child, please prioritize response by listing most preferred as 1.)

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
All day (7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)	50%			
Mornings only (7:30 a.m.-noon)				
Afternoons only (noon-6:00 p.m.)				
Before school (7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m.)				
After school (3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)	23%			
Nights (5:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.)				
Day and night (7:30 a.m.-11:00 p.m.)				
Summer and public school vacation only				
Other (explain)				

(Use separate page for additional children)

14. What is the most you would pay for quality child care per child (choose the one time period you are most familiar with)?

Child 1:	$1.88/hour	or $9.00/day	or $ 43 /week	or $ 148/month
Child 2:	$1.62/hour	or $8.25/day	or $ 38 /week	or $ 147/month
Child 3:	$1.25/hour	or $7.72/day	or $ 34 /week	or $ 181/month
Child 4:	$N.R.*/hour	or $6.67/day	or $ 45 /week	or $N.R./month

15. What method of determining fees would you prefer for funding an on-campus child care center? (If more than one method is acceptable, please rank by listing most preferred as 1.)

___ A set fee for all children
XX A sliding scale based on total family income or ability to pay
___ Work at center in exchange for reduced fees
___ Other (specify) _____

16. Does your child have any special condition requiring special programming?

4% Yes ___ No If yes, explain.

17. Comments:

*N.R. means no response.

Summary of Responses in Italics

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
STUDENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Fall 1983

1. Is there a child (or children) under 12 years of age living in your home?

30% UG*, 43% G** Yes ___ No 69% UG, 57% G, 63% Total
36% Total If so, how many? (Circle appropriate number) 1 2 3 4 over 4
(Majority of those responding "Yes" have 1 child - 57%)

2. Student Classification: Undergraduate 46%
Graduate 54%

Employed: 63% Yes 37% No

Number of hours employed per week:

63% total employed -- breakdown of those employed

10% Under 10 hours
34% 10-20 hours
24% 20-30 hours
32% 30-40 hours

3. **If there are no children under 12 living in your home, please fold questionnaire and place it in campus mail. Thank you.**

If both you and your spouse received this questionnaire, please return only one.

4. Respondent's Sex: Male 50% Female 50%
Marital Status: Married 99% Single ___
of those responding to question

5. Child care arrangements while you attend class and/or work:

Following the chart is a list of 11 child care arrangements, each one identified with a number 1 to 11. For each child under age 12 in your home:

(a) identify your current child care arrangements by placing the appropriate number(s) from this list in the table below;
(b) list each child's age and number of hours of child care needed per week;
(c) list what arrangements you prefer.

	Example	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Age of child	4 yrs.	57% UG,	53% G, 1-3 years		
Number of hours of child care per week	30	Majority	40 hours;	Followed by 10 hours	
Primary arrangement now using	4	1) Spouse	2) Babysitter		
Arrangement preferred (List two priorities)	3 5	1) Spouse	(23%); 2)	Babysitter	(13%)

(Use separate page for additional children)

1. Child cared for by your spouse
2. Child cared for by relative or friend
3. Child cared for by babysitter in your home
4. Child cared for by babysitter in babysitter's home/Family Day Care
5. Parent cooperative program
6. Half-day program (nursery school, Head Start, pre-school, play group)
7. All-day child care center
8. After school program
9. Drop-in program on as-needed basis
10. Child cared for by him/herself
11. Other (specify) _____

*UG: undergraduate; **G: graduate

6. What do you currently pay for child care per child (choose the one time period you are most familiar with)? (If more than one child, list each one separately.)

Child 1:	$1.30/hour	or $7.40/day	or $ 41 /week	or $ 99 /month
Child 2:	$1.00/hour	or $N.R.*/day	or $ 37 /week	or $ 49 /month
Child 3:	$ .75/hour	or $N.R./day	or $ 40 /week	or $ 35 /month
Child 4:	$N.R./hour	or $N.R./day	or $N.R./week	or $N.R./month

7. Are you satisfied with your current child care arrangements? (Circle a number.)

77%

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

dissatisfied satisfied very satisfied

8. If you are dissatisfied with some aspects of your present child care arrangements, which aspects are inadequate?

1. #1 Child's physical safety
2. #2 Competence of caregiver(s)
3. #3 Location
4. #4 Child's developmental and educational needs
5. ___ Cost
6. ___ Health & sanitary conditions
7. ___ Facilities
8. ___ Separation of siblings
9. ___ Hours
10. ___ Nutrition
11. ___ Other (list) _____

9. How important is quality, reliable child care to your continued education? (Circle a number.)

UG 28% essential

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

unimportant important essential

G Complete continuum - 30% said important

10. What effect has your current child care arrangement had on your academic performance in the following areas? (Circle a number.) **(Reminder: Your response is anonymous.)**

1. Lateness to class	G & UG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		decreased			no effect			increased
2. Absenteeism from class	G & UG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		decreased			no effect			increased
3. Productivity of classwork	G & UG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		decreased			no effect			increased

11. How could the University best help you meet your child care needs?

Rank top three by listing most preferred as 1:

G UG

___ ___ Family day care systems (A network of independent, self-employed family day care operators who would be affiliated with the University)

#2 ___ Before and/or after school care

___ #3 Purchase of slots (University would reserve and/or subsidize the cost of placement in existing child care programs)

#1 #1 Alternative work schedules (Flextime, part-time work, and/or job sharing)

#3 #2 Half-day program

___ ___ On-campus child care center (all day)

___ ___ Other (specify) _____

*N.R.: No response

12. Circle the days you would regularly use a child care service for academic and/or work related purposes.

G Only — G & UG

Monday Tuesday (Wednesday) Thursday (Friday Saturday Sunday)

13. Approximately what hours of the day would you need care for your children? (If you check more than one item per child, please prioritize response by listing most preferred as 1.)

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
All day (7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)	23%			
Mornings only (7:30 a.m.-noon)	14%			
Afternoons only (noon-6:00 p.m.)				
Before school (7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m.)	23%			
After school (3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)	14%			
Nights (5:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.)	25%			
Day and night (7:30 a.m.-11:00 p.m.)				
Summer and public school vacation only				
Other (explain)				

(Use separate page for additional children)

14. What is the most you would pay for quality child care per child (choose the one time period you are most familiar with)?

Child 1:	$1.80 /hour	or	$8.60 /day	or	$ 38 /week	or	$ 93 /month
Child 2:	$1.60 /hour	or	$6.90 /day	or	$ 33 /week	or	$ 35 /month
Child 3:	$ .90 /hour	or	$N.R. /day	or	$ 30 /week	or	$ 80 /month
Child 4:	$N.R.* /hour	or	$N.R. /day	or	$N.R. /week	or	$N.R. /month

15. What method of determining fees would you prefer for funding an on-campus child care center? (If more than one method is acceptable, please rank by listing most preferred as 1.)

___ A set fee for all children
XX A sliding scale based on total family income or ability to pay
___ Work at center in exchange for reduced fees
___ Other (specify) _____

16. Does your child have any special condition requiring special programming?

1% Yes ___ No If yes, explain.

17. If your spouse is not currently working or attending school, would he or she attend school or work if child care were not a problem?

11% Yes 5% No (84% did not respond)

18. Comments:

*N.R.: No response